The Rhumb Line

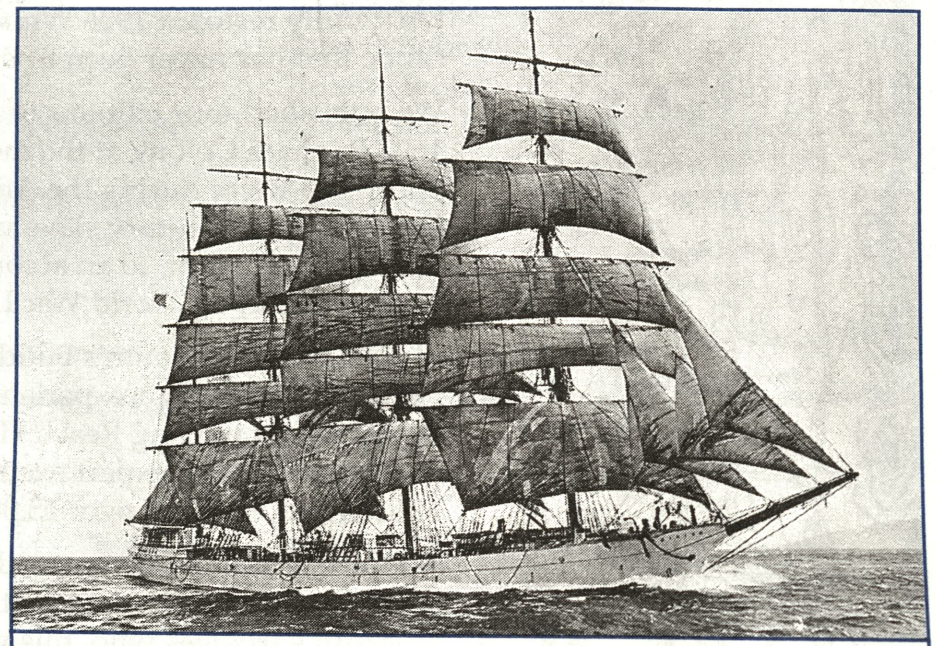
Maine Maritime Museum

March 2005 — *Explore Maine's Maritime History Where It Began!* — Number 41

Contraband to Kalmar: Dirigo at War

By Thaddeus Lyford

Dirigo, the first American-built steel sailing vessel, had a long, successful, and relatively trouble-free career. From her launch in 1894 she tramped around the world delivering coal, case-oil (kerosene), grain, sugar and general cargo. For Arthur Sewall and Company who built her she was to be the start of a new golden age of American shipping under sail, but in the end only ten steel vessels followed her down the ways, and no other yards in the United States built steel square-riggers. By the time the First World War came Arthur Sewall and Company was getting out of the business and selling off their fleet. By the dawn of 1915 the Sewalls owned three of the four barks they built for their own account: the *William P. Frye, Edward Sewall,* and *Dirigo.*[1] Within a year none remained in Sewall service. As interesting as *Dirigo's* career was with the Sewalls, the last year and a half of the ship's life under different owners are even more intriguing. The ship and her master became embroiled in the issues of war, blockade and contraband and, after weathering all that, was sunk by a German submarine in May, 1917.



The Sewall-built four-masted bark Dirigo, at sea.

The last outward charter for *Dirigo* as a Sewall ship was with a cargo of case oil from Philadelphia to Shimonoseki, Japan. *Dirigo* left Philadelphia on January 17, 1915, clearing the Delaware Breakwater on the 19th.[2] Commanding *Dirigo* was veteran master Walter M. Mallett of Topsham, Maine, who had been aboard since July 1912. This last voyage for the Sewalls proved to be a difficult one. By the time he found himself in Seattle 10 months later, Mallett had been through the Panama Canal, the second American sailing ship to do so.[3] Then he made an agonizing 77-day passage to Japan from Panama, and discharged his cargo at two Japanese ports. He then received orders to proceed to San Carlos, Luzon, Philippines for sugar. However, being the wrong season with contrary winds, he spent a month in Japan waiting for a tug to tow him to San Carlos, only to abandon the trip due to a 5-knot maximum speed (with favorable winds) and a looming canceling date on the charter party (the contract governing the charter). He returned to Kobe for orders, and then made a 56-day passage in ballast back across the Pacific to Seattle.[4] Upon arrival he discovered that the Sewalls had sold the ship on September 9 to G. W. McNear, Inc., of San Francisco for $140,000.[5]

Captain Walter Mallett and his wife Kate, in Japan.

It was with some surprise that Captain Mallett arrived in Port Townsend October 2 to find that the ship had been sold, he had a new employer, and the ship's homeport was now San Francisco rather than Bath.[6] The new cargo was barley, loaded in Seattle for Kalmar, Sweden. Mallet likely anticipated a routine trip to Europe and then the usual return in ballast to an East Coast port. Given this eventual arrival in Philadelphia or New York, Kate, his wife, went ashore in Washington and returned home to Maine overland. Why Mallett put his wife ashore was fairly obvious. Since war had been raging in

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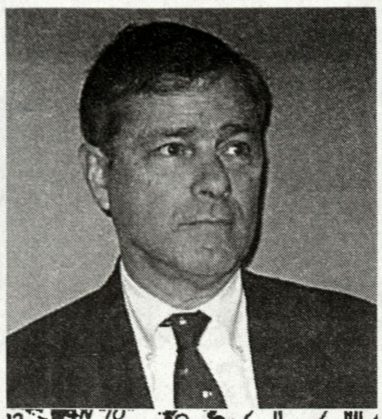

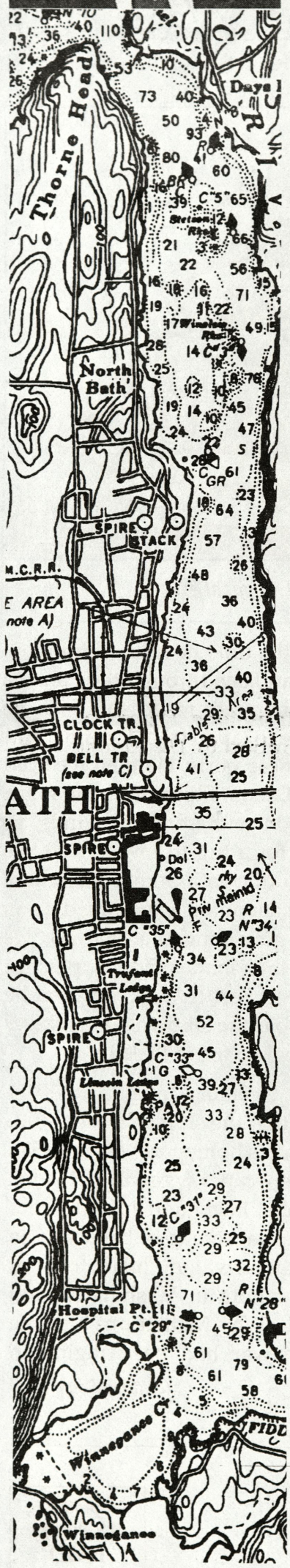

From The Chart Table

All things considered, it was a good year.

Your museum continues to be an active collecting institution. Elsewhere in this issue, Curator Nathan Lipfert highlights some of the wonderful things that have come aboard during this past year.

We are constantly refining and renewing our exhibit offerings. In May we opened a marvelous new permanent exhibition called *Distant Lands of Palm and Spice,* telling some of the stories of Maine's impact on ocean commerce around the world. We opened a temporary exhibit called *Watermen of Merrymeeting Bay* that discussed the commercial use of this most interesting body of water by fishermen and waterfowlers. Two extremely interesting canoe models - a beautifully restored 1906 White canoe with a sailing rig and a 1941 Old Town canoe that has never been in the water - graced our entrance hall for the summer.

We published four editions of *The Rhumb Line* with lead articles ranging from the 1607 Popham Colony at the mouth of the Kennebec River, to an excursion up the Sheepscot River during the American Revolution by HMS *Rainbow* frigate, to a late eighteenth century slave voyage from the West Indies to Savannah by the Maine vessel *Syren,* to an account of female shipbuilders at Bath's Texas Company during World War I.

Several of the Museum's buildings got new roofs or new paint jobs. 40,000 or so visitors enjoyed their experience here. Sebasco Harbor Resort gave refreshment to thousands in Long Reach Hall. Captain Mike Kiernan's Long Reach Cruises provided safe and expert excursions on local waterways. Hundreds of volunteers provided over 15,000 hours of expert time and effort.

And, thousands of you provided generous financial support to the Museum's activities. It must be said that we all owe a great debt of gratitude to the Museum's trustees who, this year particularly, provided remarkable leadership in our fundraising endeavors.

As I usually do, I urge you to read through the Annual Report pages of this edition to note the names of your colleagues. Together we have carried on a forty-year tradition of promoting an understanding and appreciation of the rich maritime heritage of Maine.

Tom

Thomas R. Wilcox, Jr.
Executive Director

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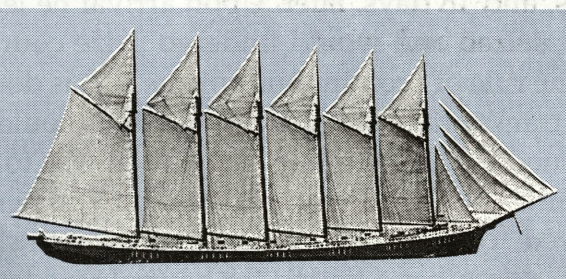

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Contraband to Kalmar: *Dirigo* at War

Europe and the Atlantic since August 1914, they both must have known the dangers lurking in the Atlantic. Officially, the United States was a neutral power free to trade with other neutrals, even those in the war zone, such as Norway or Sweden. But this was complicated the previous January when one of *Dirigo's* sisters, the *William P. Frye,* was sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser Prinz Eitel Friedrich in the Atlantic. The captain, his wife, and crew of that ship had all been taken off before the sinking and treated humanely, but Mallett must have known that the danger of being sunk without warning was high, considering the tragic loss of the RMS *Lusitania* the previous May.[7]

Besides sending Kate home, Mallett took another precaution before *Dirigo* left for Europe. Because of the danger of mistaken identity, he had a large U.S. flag and the name painted on each side of the ship, marking it as a neutral and not officially subject to molestation by belligerents.[8] He loaded barley at Tacoma and Seattle, set out for Kalmar on October 24, 1915, and cleared Cape Flattery the next day.[9]

Most of the passage was uneventful. Mallett went via Cape Horn and not back through the Panama Canal as planned since it was closed due to continuing mudslides which had slowed his passage through the previous February.[10] Once into the Atlantic Mallett shaped his course west and north around Britain and thence into the North Sea, rather than up the English Channel, perhaps to avoid minefields, but also because he considered it no savings in time or distance to go that way.[11] Mallett never made it to Sweden. On the morning of March 2, 1916 when about 400 miles from the Shetland Islands *Dirigo* was stopped and boarded by the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Orotava* on patrol in the North Sea.[12]

Captain Mallett and the *Dirigo* had run afoul of the British blockade system, in place since the start of the war to deny Germany vital seaborne materiel and supplies. During the decade before the war there was much international discussion and debate on the conduct of belligerents at sea during wartime, the conditions of blockade, the rights of neutrals and belligerents, and the definition of contraband, some features of which had precedent of hundreds of years. A conference took place in 1908, in which all the major maritime powers participated, resulting in the 1909 Declaration of London. It laid out the rules governing the issues listed above in a series of agreements similar to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. Even though many nations signed the agreement, or major portions of it, not one country ratified it.[13] So, by the time war broke out in 1914 there existed a system to regulate blockade but no one was legally bound to it. However, in 1913, the British Admiralty adopted the Declaration of London as the basis for a prize manual to be used by their warships on blockade duty.[14]

In its original form the Declaration allowed neutrals to trade with other neutrals or belligerents in the war zone, as long as it did not involve contraband cargoes. At the start of the war "contraband" was narrowly defined as any item that might be directly useful to an enemy's military, such as weapons, uniforms, or ammunition. During the course of the conflict the contraband list grew to include almost any item that would be of use to a modern army. Since most items on the contraband list were also useful to civilians, there was considerable debate on what could and could not be included on the contraband list. To help alleviate some of the confusion there were lists of "conditional" contraband and "absolute" contraband, but by the time the last list was published in June 1917 any sort of cargo bound for a belligerent port was considered "absolute" contraband.

In order to ease the burden upon neutral shippers Britain developed a system known as "Navicert" or "navigation certification".[15] Navicert allowed a neutral to have a cargo manifest pre-approved and the cargo inspected by British government authorities before the ship even left port. Navicert effectively pushed control of the blockade back to the home ports of the neutral shippers like the United States, much to the annoyance of some of these ship operators.[16] Thus was the thorny international issue Mallett had blundered into when the Royal Navy boarded his ship on that stormy March morning in 1916.[17]

The British authorities wished to inspect the ship and examine her papers more thoroughly, and so Mallett was ordered to Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, or Lerwick, in the Shetlands; whichever proved most convenient. An armed guard of four men under the command of Sublieutenant Hall came aboard for the trip.[18] Mallett made for Lerwick, arriving there March 20, 400 miles, and 18 days, later. Upon arrival he learned that his ship was seized and would undergo prize court proceedings under the rule of "continuous voyage". This doctrine held that a cargo transported between two neutrals could be seized if it was learned that its ultimate destination was to a belligerent. At the time of *Dirigo's* voyage, the barley in her hold was still considered "conditional" contraband. So, if the barley was "conditional" contraband bound for neutral Sweden, how did the British authorities decide that it could be seized under "continuous voyage"?

During this period the activities of G. W. McNear Inc., *Dirigo's* new owner, were under scrutiny by the British Admiralty and Foreign Office. It began with another vessel of McNear's, the 863-ton bark *Andrew Welch* making a voyage from San Francisco to Halmstead, Sweden with barley and beans. In September 1915 the vessel passed through the Panama Canal. The senior partner of Ehrman and Company, the banking firm doing business with McNear in Panama, informed the British contact there he thought the ship was

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Dirigo, *lying in Lerwick Harbor, Shetland Islands, March 1916. Note the ship's name and U. S. flag painted on her side.*

Contraband to Kalmar: *Dirigo* at War

bound for Germany rather than Sweden.[19] He further reported,

"...According to further information obtained from a Shipmaster in this port; Messrs McNear & Co. who are owners and shippers are classed as very second-rate in commercial circles in San Francisco, and are extremely anti-British. It was current talk when my informant left San Francisco that the cargo is intended for Germany, and Mr. McNear made no secret of its real destination; in fact he took such pains to have this known it was the general opinion he desires to have the Andrew Welch seized in order to claim compensation and foment trouble between the United States and Great Britain." [20]

The correspondence continued, further indicting McNear and the *Andrew Welch.* A directive was issued from the Foreign Office to the Admiralty to capture the ship if possible, and was accomplished by the HMS *Columbelle* on October 2. Like *Dirigo,* an armed guard was put aboard, but stormy conditions forced the little bark into Christiansand, Norway in distress. However, Norway was neutral, and could legally inter the prize crew as well as the ship. A compromise between Norway and Britain was struck: the return of the prize crew to Britain, for the release of the ship. The *Andrew Welch* continued on to Halmstead, where she arrived on December 1.[21] Although the British lost this ship, they considered making British ports "unhealthy" for her in the future. Other intelligence came to the Foreign Office suggesting that McNear ("a well-known German agent") was also engaged in supplying German cruisers in the Pacific and that one of these supply ships, *SS Sacramento* was then interned in Valparaiso.[22] But perhaps the most damning piece of information came from a deciphered telegram from a Mr. Howard (presumably a Foreign Office agent) in Stockholm on December 15: "I hear on excellent authority that (the) German Government have asked Swedish Government as a special favour to allow...*Andrew Welch* to proceed to Germany to discharge there...".[23]

When the British government learned that G. W. McNear, Inc. purchased *Dirigo,* they also put her on the watch list. Independently, and unaware of this watch list, flags started to pop up in the American offices of private companies working with McNear.[24] A grain merchant based in Portland, Oregon, M. H. Houser, contacted their agent in Seattle regarding the loading of *Dirigo's* grain. Houser had received a telegram from McNear requesting that the cargo be inspected by the British authorities in Seattle certifying, "no contraband on board" before departure. Houser further complained to their agent that the McNear name was not to appear on any of the documentation, that "M. H. Houser" would be the contacting agent instead. Houser further instructed his contact in Seattle:

"Be sure and show the wire to the Consul, as there is something peculiar about it and we do not want to be known as the principals in this. McNear has asked us to be it all in our name and on account of so many shipments we have, I do not want to get into any entanglements whatsoever. We have even ourselves turned down some pretty nice offers from the Norwegians on Barley and do not care to be the goat for McNear."[25]

Mr. Pelly of the British consulate in Seattle duly certified *Dirigo's* barley cargo on October 20, only days before she set out for Sweden. In a letter from the Seattle Consulate to the British Embassy in Washington, D. C., the acting consul, John Grant, described the loading of the ship and the connections between Houser, McNear, the recipients in Sweden, and the cargo, further saying: "Mr. Pelly indicates to me confidentially that he is of the opinion that the ultimate destination is Germany..." and submitted the Houser letter and McNear telegram as proof of this.[26]

Walter Mallett, meanwhile, an unwilling participant in the affairs of grain merchants, shipowners, and foreign governments, wrote home from Lerwick to his fellow sea captain, brother in law, and mentor in Topsham, Captain Jacob Merriman, sharing his thoughts on the (mis)fortunes of war[27]:

"Neutrals seem to have few if any rights on the high seas these days. I guess we will all have to stay at home, to be protected...I can understand why the cargo was seized, for doubtless they have some reason to believe that it was intended for Germany, finally; but why the ship has to go through the prize court I don't yet see; for she is a neutral from a neutral country and bound to another neutral country...I suppose the whole business will finally be settled fairly, sometime and somehow. Personally, I have been treated with the utmost courtesy."[28]

While musing on his current predicament, one of his crew was accused by the British of being German, though he insisted he was from Pennsylvania. The man could provide no proof of his citizenship, and Mallett could do little but stand by when the man was taken ashore and presumably imprisoned.[29]

After enjoying the wind-blasted scenery of their Shetland anchorage for seventeen days, *Dirigo* was ordered to Fleetwood, England (just north of Liverpool) under tow on April 6. However, the weather deteriorated quickly upon their departure and they were forced to shelter near Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands two days later. Setting out again on April 17, they passed the suitably named Cape Wrath, on the northernmost point of mainland Scotland the next day, and finally into Morecambe Bay on the 20th, making Fleetwood the day after.[30] Soon after arrival the crew were paid off and discharged, leaving Captain Mallett (and presumably the officers as well) with the condemned ship.[31] The cargo too, was discharged here.

At some point during this time, news came to Walter Mallett that his ship had been sold again. The transaction occurred on March 10 to C. C. Mengel & Brother, Company, of Louisville, Kentucky, an importer and manufacturer of mahogany lumber and veneers.[32]

Mallett and *Dirigo* sat in Fleetwood for nearly seven months, before shifting to Liverpool on November 15. Finally, on February 13, 1917, two weeks short of a year after he'd been captured, the ship was allowed to leave for the United States.[33] Mallett crossed the Atlantic Ocean as master for the last time, arriving in New York on April 2. Within a few weeks of getting home he returned to Topsham, Maine, his wife, and retired from the sea. At this time, two more things happened which altered the ship's fate: the United States declared war on Germany April 6, and on April 17, the ship was sold to the Axim Transportation Company of Pensacola, Florida.[34]

Dirigo went to sea for the last time on May 5, 1917 with a general cargo. She had a new master, John A. Urquhart of Brooklyn. This time the ship was not a neutral bound for a neutral port, but a belligerent for a co-belligerent port: Le Havre. On the morning of May 31, as she entered the English Channel after an uneventful passage across the Atlantic of 27 days, *Dirigo* was sunk by a U-boat. The Germans fired a cou-

(continued on page 6)

ple of shots over the bow, called the ship to heave-to and then placed bombs in her hold. There was only one casualty, Mate John Ray of Eastport, Maine who drowned while prematurely launching one of the ship's boats. The U-boat commander pointed the sailors in the lifeboats to the direction of nearest land and disappeared into the morning haze, leaving the men alone on the sea. Within two hours they were picked up by the trawler *Faithful* and landed at Plymouth shortly after three that afternoon.35

News of *Dirigo's* loss rippled across the maritime world, particularly in Bath and the Sewall company who built her. Although his reaction is not recorded, Captain Mallett must have felt a mixture of relief, for not having a ship sunk from under him, and loss, for the demise of a ship that he served in some unusual and trying times. Indeed, the last two years of *Dirigo's* career would have sorely tested the will and patience of any master, and it is fortunate that she had such an able mariner on her quarterdeck. In the end it did not matter who was captain, and it seems that the Fates finally had it in for the ship. Perhaps *Dirigo* was lucky not to have met the fate of her sisters: left to rust away in some backwater, or scrapped, or intentionally sunk as a breakwater or disposed of after a long career as a tank-barge. The ship still lies in the English Channel, an example of America's last attempt at blue water merchant sailing, and the first American-built steel merchant sailing ship.

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[1] The fourth vessel the Sewalls owned and managed, the *Arthur Sewall, disappeared while on a passage between Delaware and Seattle in 1907.*

[2] *Arthur Sewall & Company,* Ship Book, January 1, 1882-1916, *Sewall Papers MS-22, Box 205, Maine Maritime Museum, p. 72.*

[3] Receipt, Cristobal, Canal Zone, February 4, 1915, Box284/10, Ship *Dirigo. Dirigo's* gross tonnage was 3,004.8 tons, with a net tonnage of 2,855.79. The Sewall Ship Book lists a third tonnage rating, labeled "Panama Canal" tonnage, at 2,832.76 tons. Altogether the toll and towage charges through the Canal amounted to $3,660.80. The toll was the costliest portion of the bill, at $1.20 per ton reckoned at 2,816 tons displacement: for a total of $3,379.20. The towage charge was considerably cheaper at 10 cents a ton, for a total $281.60.

Clair Rankin, The Tall Voyagers: The Story of Barney Burnett, Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, 1965, p.96.

[4] Ship Book, p.72, Charter Party, April 30, 1915, Box 284/14, Ship *Dirigo*. Mark Hennessey, The Sewall Ships of Steel, p.639.

[5] Letter, Walter M. Mallett to Arthur Sewall & Company, September 9, 1915, Box 278/1, Ship *Dirigo*. The Sewalls must have been very pleased to get a 90% return on investment from a profitable, twenty-year old ship.

[6] Letter, WMM to AS&Co., October 3, 1915, Box 280/12, Ship *Dirigo*.

[7] Interestingly, Captain Richard Quick and the *Edward Sewall* made a similar voyage, with similar concerns, the year before. On October 12, 1914 he began a passage from Seattle to Queenstown (for orders) with general cargo and grain. A passage of 136 days ensued, with a 14 knot run up the Irish Sea bypassing minefields and lurking Uboats. He made Dublin on March 6, 1915. Accompanying Captain Quick was his wife, Susie, and their two daughters Susan and Clarabelle. Personal Communication from Tom Wilcox, January 10, 2005.

[8] Richard B. Noble, "*Dirigo* of Bath, America's First Steel Square-Rigger", Down East, September 1971, p.5 The Brunswick Record, June 30, 1916, p.3. It is not known if painting a flag and the ship's name on her sides was a requirement set by governments, or simply a generally accepted precaution.

[9] New York Maritime Register (NYMR), November 3, 1915, p.24.

[10] Letter, WMM to AS&Co., October 8, 1915, Box 280/12, Ship *Dirigo*.

[11] The Brunswick Record, June 30, 1916, p.10.

[12] William Armstrong Fairburn, Merchant Sail, V.3, Center Lovell, Maine: Fairburn Educational Foundation, 1945-1955, p.1784. The Brunswick Record, June 30, 1916, p.10.

[13] James Brown Scott, ed., The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907, New York: Oxford University Press, 1918, p.i-ii.

[14] John W. Coogan, The End of Neutrality: The United States, Britain and Maritime Rights, 1899-1915, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981, p.135.

[15] H. Ritchie, The "Navicert" System During the World War, Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1938.

[16] Robert G. Albion, Sea Lanes in Wartime: The American Experience, 1775-1942, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1942, p.197.

[17] Log, HMS *Orotava*, March 2, 1916, Admiralty Records ADM53/53792, Public Records Office.

[18] Ibid., The Brunswick Record, June 30, 1916, p.10. Log, HMS *Orotava*, March 2, 1916, Admiralty Records ADM53/53792, Public Records Office.

[19] [19] Letter, Sir C. Mallet (Panama) to Sir Edward Grey, Bart, KG, MP (Foreign Office, London) September 21, 1915. Public Record Office 15135.

[20] Letter, Sir C. Mallet (Panama) to Sir Edward Grey, Bart, KG, MP (Foreign Office, London) September 27, 1915. Public Record Office 156018.

[21] Ibid., 172419/15

[22] Letter, Mr. W. Malkin, December 12, 1917, PRO.

[23] Telegram, Mr. Howard to Sir Edward Grey, December 15, 1915, number 1899 PRO 192087.

[24] Public Record Office, General Files, 1915, 166021, November 5, 1915.

[25] Letter, M. H. Houser to Mr. A. M. Scott, October 6, 1915. Public Record Office, FO 382/377.

[26] Letter, John S. Grant, Acting Consul, Seattle, to Sir Cecil A. Spring-Rice, Ambassador, Washington, D.C., October 22, 1915. Public Record Office, FO 382/377.

[27] Bunting, William H., Sea Struck, Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House Publishers, 2004, p. 149.

[28] Ibid. The Brunswick Record. Letter written to Captain Merriman by Captain Mallett, Lerwick, Shetlands, March 24, 1916. According to the letters, Mallett served as first mate with Captain Merriman in the *"Belle of Oregon"* and the *"Henry Failing"*. By the telling of his nephew, Richard Mallett of Farmington, Maine, Walter Mallett had a very agreeable time while interred in Britain. The British took pains to convince him that it was his ship that was condemned, not him. Richard Mallett, personal communication, January 13, 2005.

[29] The Brunswick Record. Letter to Captain Merriman by Captain Mallett, Lerwick, Shetlands, March 24, 1916.

(continued on page 7)

[30] Ibid., The Brunswick Record, June 30, 1916, p.10. NYMR, May 10, 1916, p.24

[31] Rankin, p.123.

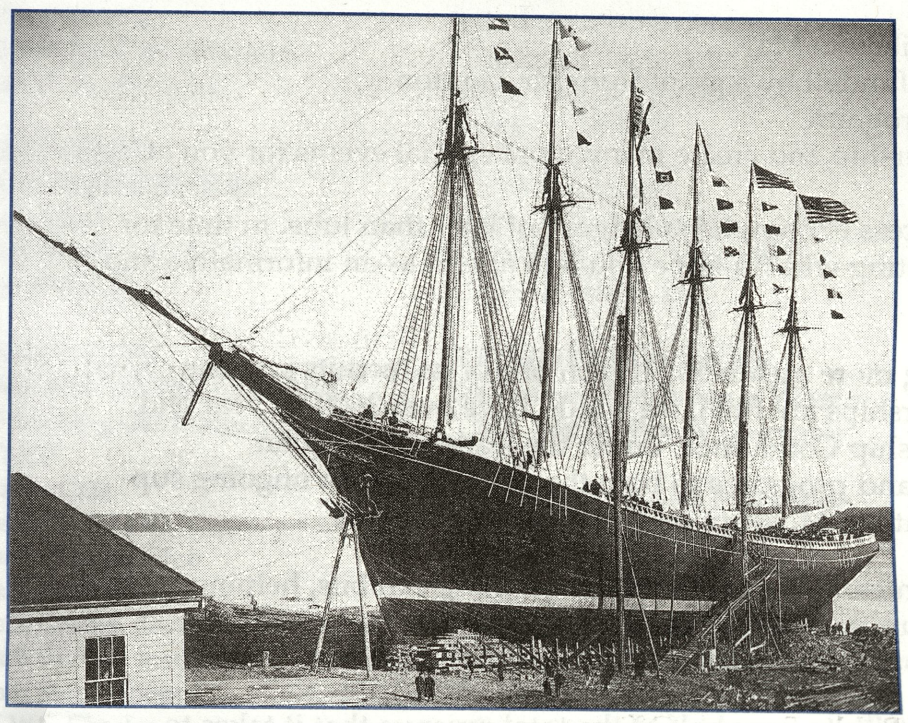
[32] Hennessey, p.653; Fairburn, V.3, p.1784; Letter, CC Mengel & Brother, Co. to AS&Co., March 29, 1916, Box 279/1, Ship *Dirigo*.

[33] NYMR, March 7, 1917, p.24.

[34] Certificate of Registry, April 21, 1917, National Archives. It is interesting to note that the secretary for this company was none other than C. C. Mengel himself, the previous owner.

[35] Affadavit on the sinking by John A. Urquhart, master, ship *Dirigo*, to the American Consular Service, Plymouth, England, June 2, 1917, National Archives. New York Times, June 2, 1917, p.4. The captain of the *Faithful*, Robert Harrad, received a "first-grade binocular glass" from President Woodrow Wilson for his "humane and heroic action". Letter, AJ Balfour to Captain Robert Harrad. PRO.

Ruth E. Merrill



Bath, November 23, 1904. Percy & Small's shipyard prepares to launch their third six-mast schooner, the Ruth E. Merrill. She slid at five minutes past noon, which must have been fast approaching as this picture was taken. Quite a crowd of invited guests can be seen on deck, and a large, enthusiastic assemblage of the general public has begun to gather, bundled against the late-fall chill. The photographer would appear to be standing in the north-facing second floor doorway of the yard's paint shop.

Among the folks visible on the topgallant forecastle deck is presumably eleven-year-old Ruth E. Merrill, the vessel's sponsor. Her daddy, Henry R. Merrill, was the treasurer for Portland coal merchants Randall & McAllister. This position afforded the Merrills a house at #5 Eastern Promenade. Mr. Merrill arranged a special train from Portland for the occasion, which carried 198 passengers to and from the launching. Those invited to launch aboard would have trooped up the staging brow visible in the photograph. When the time came, Miss Ruth cracked a gaily-decorated bottle of champagne on the schooner's stem while announcing "I christen thee Ruth Merrill." The Bath Daily Times reporter said that "she did not appear nearly as excited as some of the party surrounding her." Afterwards, she and her parents gave a luncheon aboard the vessel, catered by Malo, consisting of chicken and lobster salads, mayonnaise, chicken and deviled ham sandwiches, hot rolls, olives, fruit, ice cream, assorted cakes and coffee.

The broad, light-colored stripe running down the lower part of the vessel's hull is a band of sheet metal, which protects the planks and caulked seams of the water line from ice. Some vessels had this ice sheathing for the load water line as well.

The Merrill had the same deck plan as the Grace A. Martin, a five-master launched by the yard four months previous. You can see the turned-stanchion railing that runs from her stern all the way to her main mast, the same as her long poop deck. She was the last schooner Percy & Small built with the long poop design. Her white oak frame was reinforced with massive steel strapping.

Percy & Small built the Merrill for Portland's J. S. Winslow & Co., whose house flag (white field, blue W) can be seen flying from the main mast truck. They paid Percy & Small a reported $135,000 for the schooner, and were able to sell her in 1917 for $300,000 (another account says $377,000) to the France & Canada Steamship Company. You can see that, despite having the latest thing in stockless anchors, she still sports the old-style trailboards favored by J. S. Winslow's manager, Eleazer W. Clark.

This photograph was donated to the Museum in 2004 by Dr. Charles E. Burden. A copy print of this same image has been in our file for some time, but now we have an original.

Can you name the masts? Sure you can. Say them with me, now - fore, main, mizzen (easy, so far!), jigger, driver, spanker. Simple.

— N. R. Lipfert

*Eight Bells**

The maritime history community lost an energetic seeker of the truth. Nicholas B. Dean died on January 28, 2005. He was born July 20, 1933.

Nick attended Dartmouth and Harvard. As a youth he worked on an oceanographic research vessel summers. He worked for ten years as a photographer for Polaroid. He taught photography. He authored or co-authored several books of photographs.

In 1987 he was part of a team that brought the forefoot (bow) section of the last surviving American clipper, *Snow Squall*, back to Portland from the Faulkland Islands. Nick was the first director of the Spring Point Museum, now the Portland Harbor Museum, which was the site of this massive artifact and of its initial conservation. The bow section and several other pieces are now part of the collections of Maine Maritime Museum.

Nick made nearly a life's work of researching *Snow Squall*, the result of which was an extraordinary and prize-winning book called *Snow Squall: The Last American Clipper Ship*, published by the Museum and Tillbury House Publishers in 2001.

Nick was instrumental in securing funding for the Museum's exhibition *Distant Lands of Palm and Spice* about Maine ships, seafarers and merchants in world ocean commerce (including *Snow Squall*) as well as a new grant to dramatically expand and improve visitors' access to the *Snow Squall* artifacts.

Nick's wife Elizabeth (Zibette), his children and grandchildren should know that the Museum is much the better place for its association with Nick over the years and that his wise counsel will be greatly missed.

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* Shipboard, eight strikes of the ship's bell (four pairs of two) signals both the end of a watch and the beginning of the next.

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February 2005

Dear Member:

I thought you might like to know what the Museum is planning this year after a very successful and financially sound 2004. The Trustees and staff are focused on the following programs and challenges:

- Complete the *Wyoming* fundraising and start construction
- Wrap-up the Strategic Plan process with the goal of making the visitor experience more interactive for a wider audience
- Donnell House opening with exhibits in May
- Improve the Snow Squall exhibit funded by a grant from Mr. Gordon
- Expand the Corporate Partners Program
- Dramatically increase our membership and create many more special events for you at the Museum
- Streamline the annual giving process to complete pledges not later than June, in time for the newly scheduled Annual Meeting which I hope you will attend as an informative and social occasion

I especially urge you to help in recruiting more members. If each one of us recruits just one more member this year (yes, gift memberships are fine), we would have over 3600 by year end. In particular, our newly formed Membership Committee, under the leadership of John Chapman, is working to develop events and programs to both thank you for your ongoing support and engage you in the happenings at the Museum on a more frequent basis.

Nearly one in ten members are also volunteers - leading tours, explaining exhibits, helping with curatorial work, doing research, tidying up the place in the spring, and a myriad of other tasks that make this place so great. Without you, the Museum simply could not operate.

Do you know that you, the members, contribute over half of the total revenue that it takes to operate this place through memberships, annual giving and endowment earnings? That most of you live within an hour's drive of Bath? That the value of volunteer hours saves more than 20% of our operating costs? That this is your Museum and, by your generous support, you are graciously helping visitors experience the wonderful maritime history of Maine (at a fraction of the charge for admission) and build our collections.

So, come around often as something new is always happening. Better yet, join the growing corps of volunteers and help the Museum deliver on its mission while enjoying this wonderful place among friends.

With many thanks for all you do,

Richard J. Klingaman
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Chap Attwell
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Ellen V. Catlin
David Chaplin
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We are truly grateful to all who made gifts to the Musuem, and volunteered for us. We make every attempt to produce accurate lists; however, mistakes can occur. Please call if your name was inadvertently omitted.

Calendar of Events

March 5th – 6th	Boat Documentation Class
March 18th – 20th	MMM at the Maine Boatbuilders Show, Portland
March 29th	Lecture TBA
April 2nd – 3rd	Lofting Workshop
April 6th	8- Week Coastal Navigation Course, Wednesdays
April 19th –22nd	Youth Model Building Workshop
April 26th	Lecture TBA
April 30th	4-Day Skiff Building Class Saturdays
May 6th	Donnell House Exhibit Opening (evening)
May 6th –8th	Symposium
May 14th	Spring Quartermasters Day
May 28th	Shipyard Tours & Themed Tours begin
June	Shipyard Demos begin
June	Boat Cruises Aboard *Sagadahoc* begin (details to follow)
June	*Sherman Zwicker* arrives for summer (details to follow)
June 18th	Members Day
June 20th	Discovery Boat Building Program Launching at Bittersweet Landing in South Bristol
July 1th – 4th	Bath Heritage Days
July 6th	Brown Bag Lecture
July 13th	Brown Bag Lecture
July 14th	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
July 20th	Brown Bag Lecture
July 22nd –24th	Family Boat Building Project
July 27th	Brown Bag Lecture
July 28th	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
August 3rd	Brown Bag Lecture
August 10th	Brown Bag Lecture
August 11th	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
August 25th	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
September 8th	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
September 5th	Shipyard Tours & Themed Tours Fall Schedule
September 22nd	Percy & Small Shipyard Open for Picnic Supper
October 7th–9th	Down East Model Makers Exhibit
October 10th	Shipyard Tours & Themed Tours Complete
October 15th	Fall Quartermasters Day
October 29th	10th Annual Pirates Party
November 1st	Fall Lecture Series
November 8th	Fall Lecture Series
November 15th	Fall Lecture Series
December 4th	Museum Open House
December 6th	Volunteer "Thank You" Reception

Upcoming Events at Maine Maritime Museum

Introduction to Measuring and Documenting Small Craft

- March 5th & 6th, 10:00am - 3:00pm

Do you have a boat you've always wanted to build? Come and spend a weekend in Maine Maritime Museum's boatshop and learn how to document and measure small watercraft. Students will learn how to take line measurements from a boat using one of the Museum's collection boats, and then learn how to use that data to build a new boat or to develop a table of offsets to record the data for future use. Space is limited to six students.

Tuition: $200/ Non-members, $175/ Members

Lofting Workshop

- April 2nd & 3rd, 10:00am - 3:00pm

Lofting is the process by which a vessel's lines are laid down full-size on a lofting floor to develop the shape of the boat. In this exciting hands-on two-day class students will learn about tables of offsets, diagonals, waterlines and buttocks lines and their various uses. At the end of the workshop you will be ready to lay down the lines of your own boat just in time for that spring project. Space is limited to six students.

Tuition: $200/ Non-members, $175/ Members

Basic Coastal Navigation Course

- April 6th through May 25th, Wednesday evenings 6:30pm – 8:30pm.

This course introduces advanced boaters to the methods needed to safely pilot a boat. Course content includes: understanding nautical charts, navigator's tools, dead reckoning, and piloting skills. The course requires taking a general knowledge exam and solving navigational problems on a chart using the skills learned. Dividers and a plotter are required for chart work and can be purchased from the Auxiliary or the Museum store if needed. The class meets once a week for two hours over an eight week period. A great way to learn the basic skills of navigation or just brush up before summer. Class space is limited to 25 students.

Tuition: $75 for non-members, $70 for Members

Youth Model Workshop

– April 19th through 22nd

Looking for a project for your youth during spring break? Have them join Maine Maritime Museum and expert modelers of the Downeast Shipmodelers' Guild in the step by step construction of a plank-on-frame wooden model kit. Children aged 10-15 are invited to participate in this fun project designed to introduce new builders to the hobby of wooden shipmodeling. The model, a basic "Crabbing Skiff" represents workboats popular along the East Coast from Cape Cod to Maryland during the 1880s to the early 1900s. This kit teaches all the techniques of model kit construction: preparation, safety, planking, cutting bevels, working with different materials and adhesives, and wooden model finishing. Due to space restrictions, participation is limited to 8.

Tuition: $75

South Bristol Eighth Graders turn over their Susan Skiff.

Skiff Building Workshop

- Beginning April 30th through May 21st, Saturdays from 9:00am- 4:00pm

In just four Saturdays students in this class will learn the basics of wooden boat building. Picking up where our lofting class left off, students will work together to build a Susan Skiff, a traditional flat-bottom skiff. Students will learn all the basics from how to set up a jig, steam bend chines, lay out a stem and transom and clench-nail lapstrake planking. Enrolment in our lofting class is **not required** but is suggested in order to help students gain a better understanding of the complete boat building process. Class meets for four Saturdays. Space is limited to six students.

Tuition: $350/ Non-members, $325/ Members

The William T. Donnell House Will Open Again!

On May 6th, 2005, there will be a member's preview of exhibits in the Donnell House. It will be in the evening - do not come during the day, because staff will still be putting on the last of the paint and blowing on it to dry it. These exhibits will mark the first time the house has been open to the public since the Designers' Victorian Show House in the summer of 1998. For the first time, we will be showing to everyone what we believe the house actually looked like while the Donnells lived there.

For this first year, we plan to reconstruct the period appearance of three of the downstairs rooms: dining room, library, and sitting room. Family members have donated some upholstered chairs and the wonderful silverplate tea set that can be seen in the rare photographs of the interior of the dining room. Professional paint analysis is being done by Brian Powell of BCA in Dedham, Mass., in hopes of learning the paint colors for these rooms in the period we will be interpreting - the 1890s. John Leeke, a preservation consultant from Portland, is working with us to help learn more about the physical structure of house, and to help begin an historic structure report.

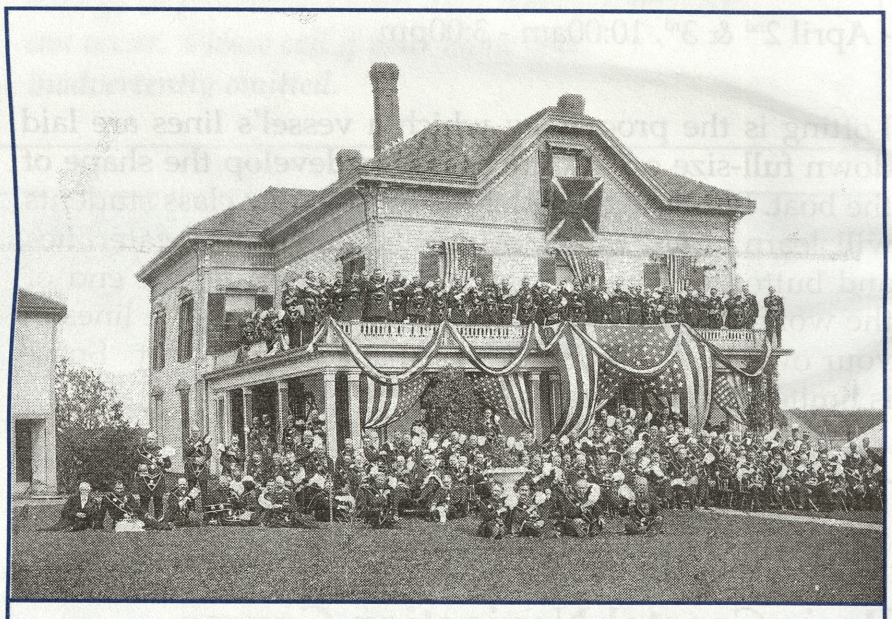
Other rooms downstairs will be used for exhibits about the family and their activities, especially their shipyard. We will concentrate our interpretation on the period when we (currently) believe the house looked the way it *does today, and still had Donnells living there - about 1892 to 1910. We will not forget William T. Donnell's mother-in-law Martha Hitchcock (who died in 1883), or his first wife and mother of his children Clara (Hitchcock)* Donnell, who died in 1890. However, we will concentrate on the period we are most likely to be able to re-construct accurately. At this time, William T. was living in the house with his children Harry H., Clara A., William R., and Addiella. The children were teenagers and young adults. In this period, Clara, Harry, and young William got married, and William T. got married for a second time. Also, Addiella died and, in 1910, William T. died. A lot happens in a family in 20 years, and it gives us a lot to talk about in our exhibits and tours of the house.

William T. Donnell was a very social individual, concerned that his home be thought of as a mansion, being active in local politics, and belonging to the most active and influential clubs and organizations in town. His children followed in his footsteps, also living active social lives which left paper trails.

One of the unique things about the house is that it overlooks the shipyard that the family owns - this is rare, even in Bath. Occupants of the house could always look out over what was happening in the yard, and later could see the activity in the Percy & Small yard just south of them. The yard's office was not in the house, but there still must have been a close connection. Even accidents in the yard must have echoed in the house.

Staff and volunteers have been having much too much fun researching, up to this point, and finding more than we thought we would. Indomitable volunteer Susan Russell, reading day after day of old newspapers, finally found the 1892 announcement that William T. Donnell was having a new ell built on the east side of his house - the ell that now contains the kitchen and dining room. Others have found other pieces of information, large and small. Members of the Donnell family have been generous both with donated artifacts and with their memories. This has been a real group effort, with wonderful results. We will need other volunteers, though, to give the tours that will keep the place open to the public. This is not the sort of exhibit where visitors can be left to go through on their own.

Training for the guides will begin in April. Please contact us if you would like to train as a regular summer docent.



The William T. Donnell home (now part of Maine Maritime Museum) on Friday, June 23, 1899. Mr. Donnell, his wife Annie and married daughter Clara A. Palmer were entertaining a local Masons group, of which he was a member, as well as the visiting St. John's Commandery from Bangor.

Collecting in 2004

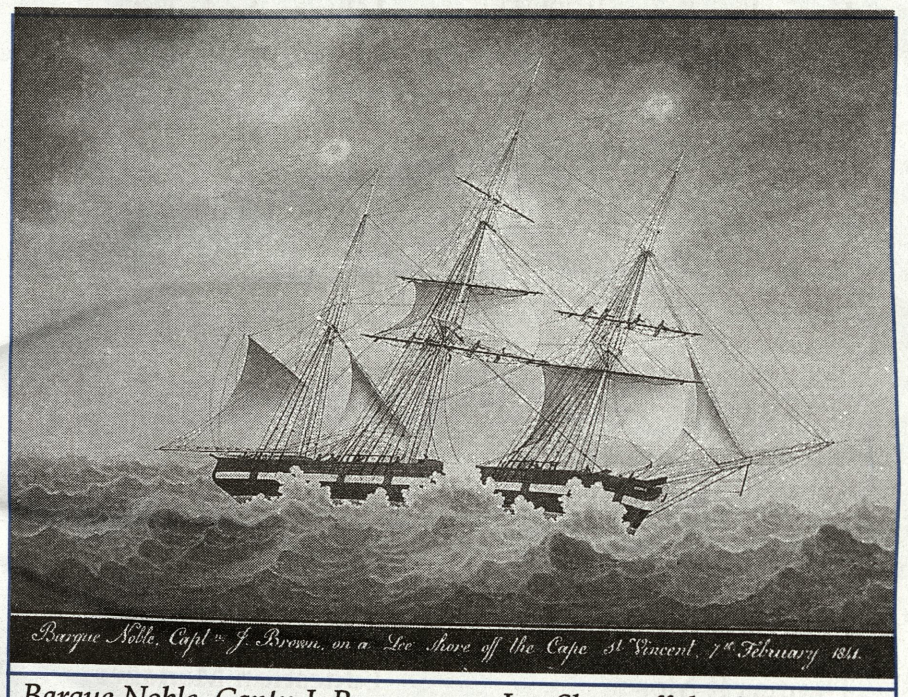
Nathan R. Lipfert, Curator & Library Director

Donors have been remarkably generous this year, from beginning to end. Space limitations prohibit the discussion here of all the wonderful things that were donated, but we cannot resist telling you about some of the most exciting items.

In the curatorial department, which cares for what are euphemistically called "three-dimensional objects," the biggest story of the year has been the nine paintings we received from various sources, as listed below.

From Edith Virginia (Brown) Whitney, a watercolor by Honoré Pellegrin of Marseilles, France, of the Maine bark *Noble* "on a Lee Shore off the Cape St. Vincent, 7th February 1841."

From Norma Desjardins, an oil-on-board portrait by an unidentified artist of Capt. William Clewley (1777-1858) of Stockton, Maine.



Barque Noble, Captn J. Brown, on a Lee Shore off the Cape St. Vincent, 7th February 1841, by Honoré Pellegrin, Marseilles, France, donated by Edith Virginia (Brown) Whitney.

From Robert B. Beith, an S. F. M. Badger oil on canvas, dated 1911, of the Phippsburg tern schooner *William E. Litchfield,* originally commanded by his grandfather, S. G. Hutchinson.

From William E. Van Horn, an Antonio Jacobsen oil on canvas of the Bath-built ship *Helen A. Wyman,* commanded for a time by his grandfather, David A. Van Horn.

From Jane & Henry Keene, an oil on canvas portrait by an unidentified artist, of Capt. Edward C. Palmer of the ship *Belle O'Brien,* circa 1888.

From Dr. Charles E. Burden, an oil on canvas by an unidentified artist of a sailing vessel's crew at the pumps.

From Dr. Charles E. Burden, a watercolor by Charles Copeland of a fishing schooner on the Banks with a liner looming out of the fog. Dr. Burden also gave eight other works of art in pastel, ink, and charcoal.

Another donation I cannot resist mentioning (again?) is the big assortment of paneling and other material from the 1912 East Boothbay-built schooner yacht *Wendameen.* Capt. Neal E. Parker's generous gift will allow us (at some future date) to re-construct this vessel's stylish main saloon.

Switching hats, I must say that the Museum's library received some stunning gifts this year, too. Books, blueprints, manuscripts and ephemera were all represented, and are appreciated. But if I have to pick one aspect of the accessions to talk about, it will be the photographs.

Allan N. Houghton added to our growing archive of publicity photos relating to movies which used Maine-built ships – six 8x10s from *The Blood Ship, The Yankee Clipper,* and *The Suicide Fleet.*

Capts. Douglas K. and Linda J. Lee added to the archivally-processed copy negatives and prints of schooner pictures which they have donated over the years.

Miriam Tod donated a large collection of motion picture film and still photographs from the collection of her late husband, author/historian/lecturer Giles M. S. Tod.

Suzanne Collins gave a collection of film negatives taken by Millard Richmond, which document the appearance of New Harbor in 1941-1942.

Meredith A. Hall donated a collection of negatives and prints taken by John Quincy Adams (1907-2004) of East Boothbay, documenting shipping along the coast in the 1920s.

Brad & Pam Cahill gave the Museum a great collection of items from the former home of boatbuilder Charles E. Blaisdell, including previously-unknown photographs of the Blaisdell boatshop in Bath before it was moved to Woolwich.

Dr. Charles E. Burden's annual donation included more than one hundred photographs, postcards, and negatives, including two images illustrating this issue of the *Rhumb Line.*

John Hodgson gave us two photographs of the steel four-mast bark *Dirigo;* not just any photos, but ones which had been personally owned by the bark's designer, J. F. Waddington.

Other folks who donated photographs included Boothbay Region Historical Society, Col. Roger Willock, USMC (Ret.), Brent Dibner, Joan Koch, John P. Lorentsen, Allan Easterbrooks, Julian Hatch, Diana Stanzione, William E. Van Horn, Sandra Dorr, Jane Lazo, Mary F. Mussenden, and Steve Crandell (in chronological order, in case you are wondering).

To these folks and all the others who made donations of historical material this past year, we give our fervent thanks. We would not be able to do our job of preserving this material for future generations if people – families – did not give us the artifacts and the archives in the first place. We thank them, and all the researchers, authors, scholars, and other visitors to the Museum thank them, too.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

DONATING HOURS OF HELP IN 2004

Many Thanks!

Kathy Allaker
Capt. Robert Anderson
Carol Anderson
David Barber
Kate Beaudette
John Beaven
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Katherine Bell
Mary L. Blanchard
Mercer Blanchard
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Todd Poole
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Bill Reinfelder
Char Reinfelder
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Susan Russell
Jonathan St. Mary
Buzz Sawhill
Tina Sawhill
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Jim Sidel
Sue Sidel
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Elizabeth Smith
Greta Smith
Karen Smith
Mark C. Smith
Phil Souza
Alan Stewart
Alice Stewart
Doug Stewart
June Stewart
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Al Stone
Ray Swain
Ann Swift
Rod Swift
Ron Tarbox
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Albert Thompson
Jack Thompson
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Sharon Trabona
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Annie Wilcox
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Casey Wong
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(As of February 2, 2005)

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(As of February 2, 2005)

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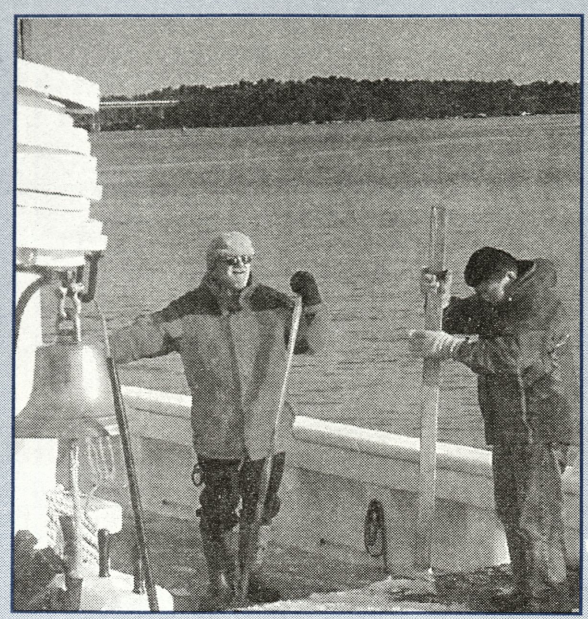
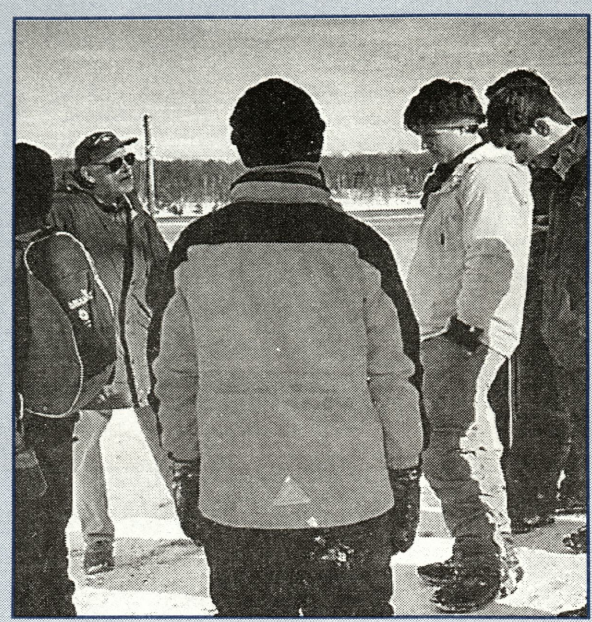
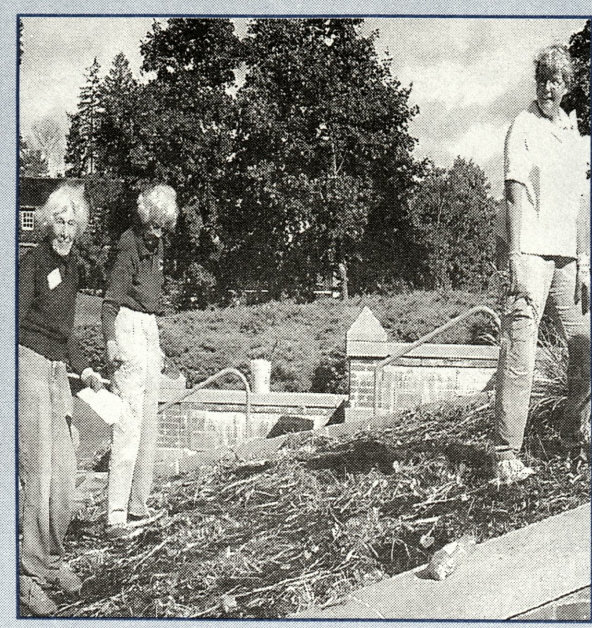
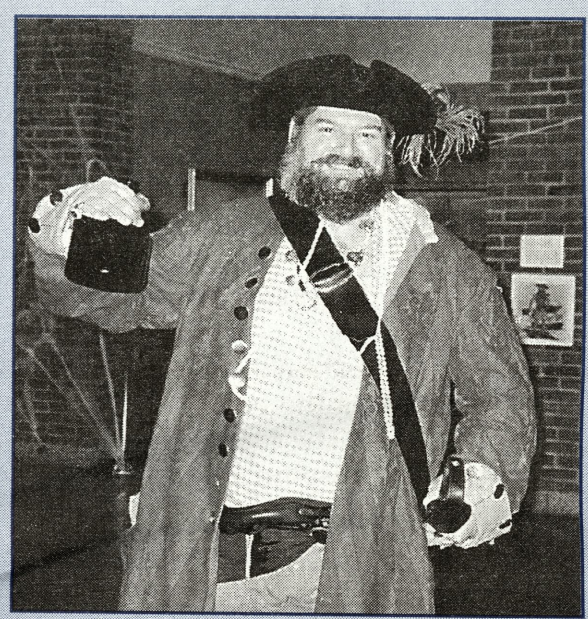


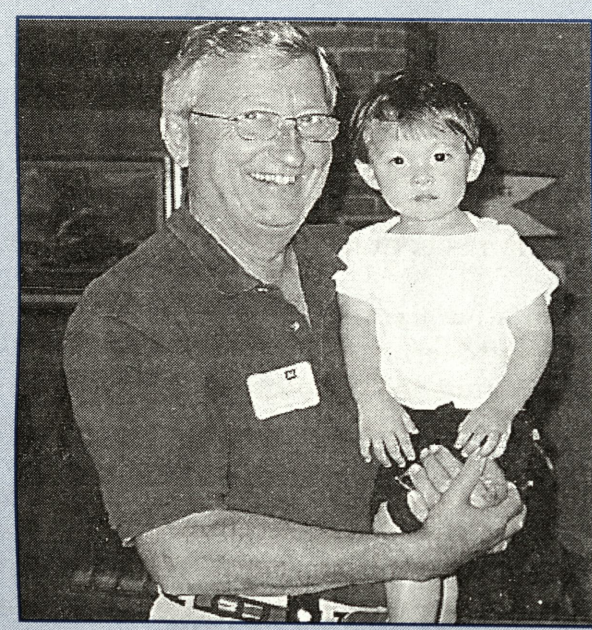


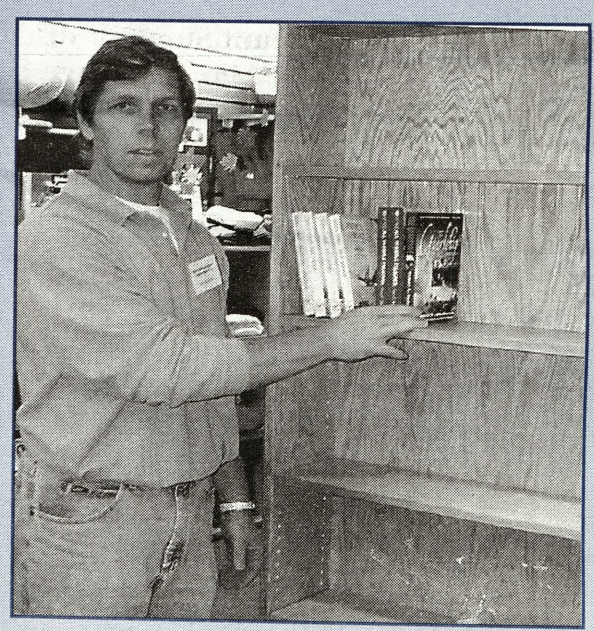


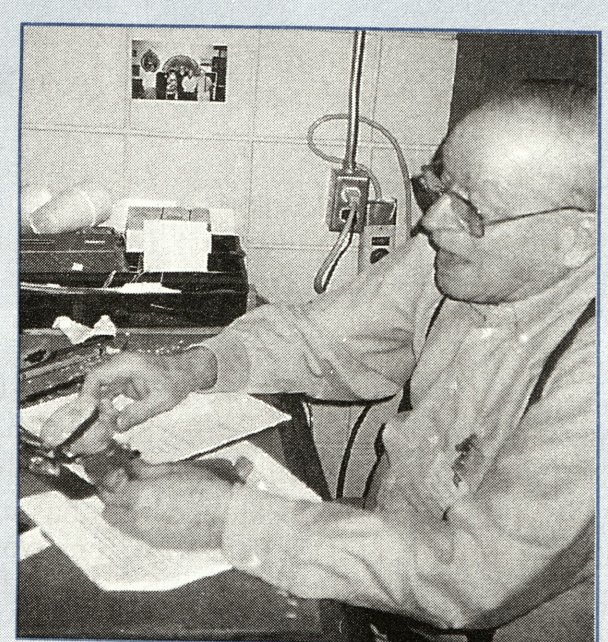


Volunteer Staff at Work in Maine Maritime Museum Departments

(Clockwise from Upper Left): Ivon Boyer & Rick Wong chip ice off the deck of the *Sherman Zwicker* prior to its December departure for home port; Tour Guide Dave Hayward shows visitors around the shipyard; Tina Sawhill, Peg Williams, and Joan Drake complete plantings and ready the gardens for winter as part of activities during Fall Quartermasters Day; Greeter Ken Partain assists while mom checks in at the Front Desk; Marty Peak pursues research in the archives in the Library; Roy Wheeler registers a sailor doll for the Archives; Administrative volunteers Al Thompson and Ruthe Pagurko prep survey for mailing; Bill Potter monitors work of South Bristol students in the *Discovery Boatbuilding Program* in the Boat Shop; Jon Brandon installs new shelving he designed and built in the Gift Shop; Jim Nelson readies for Pirates Party -the Special Event that brings 300 youngsters to the shipyard and the Haunted Ship on Halloween. In addition to staffing its twelve departments, Maine Maritime Museum volunteers participate in extensive training, and enjoy numerous events such as an Annual Cruise, Family Picnics, and lectures. A Holiday Recognition Party caps off a year of good work!







Question from a Member

Normally, when we receive a question from a member about an artifact they own, we just answer it. However, in this case we have run up against the limits of our own knowledge, and bring the question to this forum for public comment.

Our member owns the carving pictured here and described below. He believes it to be a sterncarving from a 19th century vessel, and is hoping to learn what vessel it came from, or anything more about it. Below is a description supplied by him.

"Superlative Early American carved, gilded and polychrome decorated Sternboard Eagle of large scale; with crossed flags clasped in its talons; probably Coastal New England; mid 19th century. Length 118 inches, height 29 inches.

"The Sternboard Eagle is in a very fine state of preservation. Structurally, it is in intact original condition with the addition of cleats on the back, which were applied for reinforcement after its removal from the ship and are circa 1875. At that time the back surface was also painted.
There are a number of hand-forged square-shank wrought iron nails protruding from the back side of this carving, by which the sternboard was originally secured to the vessel; these nails are now for the most part sawed off flush with the back. The number, large size (3/8" x 3/8" and ?" x ?") and placement in decorative as well as structural elements of the carving would indicate that these fasteners were for application to the stern of a vessel, where it is essential that all elements be held fast due to their exposure to weather. The fact that the paint is over the nail shanks, and is present on the cleats, confirms that the cleats were added upon removal of the sternboard from the ship, presumably to stabilize its extremely good condition.
There have been minor repairs to tips of flagpole spear terminus, to the area where the flagstaffs cross below the eagle talons and to the tip of the eagle's beak.
As is the case with most in service marine carvings, they are subject to in use cosmetic maintenance, such as regilding and repainting. This eagle shows evidence of at least three periods of old in-use regilding and retouch. Overall, it has a very pleasing surface and patina."

Does anyone out there recognize this carving?

The only sterncarving in the Museum's collection is quite noticeably curved, to fit the shape of the vessel's stern. Would this not be true of all sterncarvings? The carving owned by our member appears to be flat. The Museum has a similar-sized eagle, also flat, also strengthened with straps on the back, which was a decorative element on the exterior of an early Bath Customs House. Could our member's eagle have been an architectural element landside?

Also, we would be remiss not to mention the recent discussions in the *Maine Antique Digest* (December 2004, page 5-B, and January 2005, page 4-A) of the mid-20th century Massachusetts trade in reproduction eagle carvings. An expert probably wouldn't be fooled, but 50 years outdoors can make something look pretty old.

Any comments would be welcomed.

33rd Annual Maritime History Symposium

May 6, 7, 8, 2005

We have been hosting a yearly gathering of maritime history enthusiasts – fanatics may be too strong a word, but maybe not – since 1973. The first full weekend of every May begins with fish house punch on Friday and ends with folks who don't want to stop talking on Sunday.

Below are the folks we have lined up to make presentations this year.

Juliet Brown of Rockland is a graduate of the Rockland Apprenticeshop, and will make a presentation of her recent DVD, *Peapods of the Maine Coast*. The program on these remarkably sea-kindly small craft is part oral history and part construction technology.

James W. Hunt of Southport has been researching the 20th-century shipbuilding history of the Boothbay Harbor region, and has spoken at Symposium before. This year he will talk about the burst of Boothbay shipbuilding during World War II.

Paul M. Lawton of Brockton, Mass., has uncovered the long-hidden truth of a Casco Bay story from World War II, and will speak on "The Sinking of the U.S.S. Eagle PE-56, Silent Victim of the U-853".

Louise Nichols is in the English Department of the University of Moncton in New Brunswick; her talk is titled "Quite a Curiosity: The Sea Letters of Grace Ladd". Ladd married a Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, shipmaster and spent most of 30 years at sea with her husband and children.

Lincoln Paine, maritime historian and author from Portland, will present a topic from the Maritime History of the World which he is working on: "Were the Romans a Maritime People? Absolutely." Lincoln's talk will be the Fitzgerald-Conley lecture this year.

Maurice Smith of Kingston, Ontario, will discuss a Vermonter who became a timber forwarder and shipbuilder at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River in the 19th century: "D. D. Calvin: The Timber and Shipping Empire of Garden Island."

Norman Smith of Harpswell is a retired shipmaster and former Naval officer who will draw on his personal experience (diesel submarines, cable vessels, oil drilling vessels, and LNG tankers) over the past 50 years in his discussion of "Perils of the Sea: Piracy and Rescue."

We invite you to participate in Symposium. Registration is $70 for members and $80 for non-members (includes Friday night reception and lunch on Saturday, as well as frequent infusions of coffee). The cost of the optional Saturday supper is $30 per person. To register, call (207) 443-1316, ext. 322 before April 29th.